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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Housekeepers' Chat

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Subject: "Look to Your Refrigerator," This program, including menu, and recipe for Fish Timbales, from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

---ooOoo---

Warm weather brings its own peculiar food problems for the homekeeper. Insects to fight, food spoilage to guard against, and ice bills to pay. I think perhaps I can tell you ways to save money on your ice bill this summer. We shall talk about refrigerators for a few minutes, and then I'll broadcast a suggestion for dinner, and a brand new recipe, for Fish Timbales. The Menu Specialist is working on Easter menus this week--- she'll have them ready for us in a day or two.

Some one asked me, not long ago, whether she could reduce her ice bill by wrapping the ice in newspapers, or in a cloth.

That's a good question. Two or three women have told me that they save ice by wrapping it in heavy paper, or heavy cloth. No doubt they do, but that isn't the point -- we are trying to save food, not ice.

Let's consider the principle of ice refrigeration. Ice placed in a refrigerator melts by absorbing heat from the surrounding air. This air, becoming colder and colder, settles to the lower part of the refrigerator, while the warmer air rises, gives up heat by coming in contact with the ice, and in turn becomes chilled, and sinks to the bottom. These cold currents of air come in contact with the food, absorb heat from the food, and so cool it.

All this being true, we want the cooled air to circulate continuously and rapidly, in the refrigerator. All spaces for the passage of air from the ice chamber should be kept open. It is a mistake to wrap the ice in paper, or in cloth. Such a covering retards the circulation of air, and insulates the ice from the rest of the refrigerator.

Each article of food, placed in the refrigerator, contains a definite amount of heat, that will melt a definite amount of ice. Therefore, don't put hot foods into the refrigerator. Cool them to room temperature first.

There's another way to make ice last longer. Don't use it to cool such things as the tops of carrots, the outside leaves of lettuce, or the thick paper wrapped around parcels which come from the market, because all these things will be discarded later. Furthermore, ice is wasted when vegetables and fruits that are to be prepared almost immediately, are placed in the refrigerator, and taken out again after a few minutes.

As I said before, the main object in using a refrigerator is to save food, not ice, and real economy means having well-insulated walls, in keeping the ice chamber well-stocked, in opening the doors only when necessary, and for as brief periods as possible, and in putting nothing into the refrigerator that does not need to be kept cool. Every food put into the refrigerator should

pay for the ice it melts.

The refrigerator should be kept scrupulously clean. Only clean food, clean ice, and clean containers should be put into it. Any food spilled should be wiped up immediately with a clean, damp cloth. The ice chamber, the drainpipe, and the trap must be kept free from sediment and slime. They should be washed ocassionally with hot water and washing soda, and rinsed with cold water.

As every housekeeper knows, food is likely to draw such pests as rats and mice, flies, ants, and other household insects, unless supplies are kept covered or in closed containers, and all garbage is promptly disposed of. Besides these pests, we must protect our food from bacteria, yeasts, molds, and animal parasites.

As I mentioned the other day, the common housefly is one of the worst offenders when it comes to polluting food. The housefly fully deserves the epithet "typhoid-fever" fly, and it is also a known carrier of the bacteria of cholera, disentery, and tuberculosis. Even so-called "fly-specks", often deposited on food and dishes, may be infected with disease germs, and the eggs of dangerous parasites.

Since food costs so much, in money or work, or both, it should receive the best of care in the home. The Bureau of Home Economics has compiled a list of nine general rules, for checking or preventing food spoilage:

First, all foods should be kept clean; that is, protected from visible dirt, and from contamination by insects and other carriers of dangerous micro-organisms. Most kinds should also be kept cool. Dry foods, such as crackers, need to be prevented from absorbing moisture, and succulent foods, such as fresh vegetables, from losing it.

Second, milk, fresh meat, poultry, fish, and many fresh fruits, and vegetables, should be kept at a temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit, or preferably less, in order to check the growth of micro-organisms that cause souring and decay.

Third, all fruits and vegetables that are to be eaten raw should be thoroughly washed, for even though they look clean, dangerous bacteria may cling to skins or leaves. As a rule, uncooked meats of any kind should not be eaten. Smoking meat does not kill parasites.

Fourth, left-over cooked foods should be kept cold and covered, used promptly, especially in warm weather, and, if possible, heated thoroughly before being served again. Dangerous poisons sometimes develop in such foods, without making noticeable changes in taste or smell.

Fifth, fats and fat foods, such as nut meats and chocolate, should be kept cool, and in covered, light-proof containers, to prevent their turning rancid.

Sixth, bread and cake should be stored in a covered box or dish which is scalded frequently, so that molds cannot develop.

Seventh, flour, sugar, cereals, and other dry groceries should be kept dry and protected from household pests. Tea, coffee, and spices hold their flavor best in air-tight containers.

Eighth, canned foods keep best in a cool, dry closet or storeroom. Those in glass jars should be shielded from the light to prevent possible fading.

Ninth, under household conditions, the refrigerator is oftentimes the best means of keeping food cool. Choose one with well-insulated walls, put only clean ice and clean food in clean containers into it, and keep it clean by the daily practice of genuine neatness.

Take your pencils now, please, for the dinner menu: Fish Timbales; Buttered Carrots and Celery; Pickles; Cornbread; and Rhubarb Betty.

For the Fish Timbales, you may use tuna fish, salmon, shrimp, fresh cod, haddock, halibut, or any other fish which may be easily separated from the bones.

Nine ingredients, for Fish Timbales:

2 cups flaked cooked or canned fish	1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 cup milk	2 eggs
2 tablespoons butter	1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons flour	1 teaspoon finely chopped parsley
	Onion juice.

To repeat the nine ingredients for Fish Timbales: (Repeat).

Prepare a sauce of the butter, flour, and milk. Add to this the beaten eggs, the seasoning, and the fish. Mix well. Add more salt if needed. Pour the mixture into greased custard cups and bake for 1/2 hour in a pan surrounded by water. Turn the timbales on to a hot platter, garnish with slices of lemon, and serve at once.

To repeat the menu: Fish Timbales; Buttered Carrots and Celery; Pickles, Cornbread; and Rhubarb Betty. You will find the recipes for Cornbread and Rhubarb Betty in the Radio Cookbook.